



Fix a Leak Week

March 16-20, 2009



Leak Information and Tips

It is important to regularly check your home plumbing system for leaks. Cobb County Water System is not responsible for any private plumbing system issues. Your home plumbing system consists of all the pipe and fixtures that are on your property after the water meter connection. Visual inspections and leak tests should be a routine part of home maintenance. If you have an older home an annual plumbing inspection, by a licensed plumber, is recommended to ensure your system is functioning efficiently and there are no hidden or slow leaks.

Service Line Leaks (Underground Line) that begin on your property just after the water meter and extend into the Home

- Small Leaks generally get larger over time and increase in volume as the pipe weakens and the damage grows.
- Even a small leak over time erodes the ground around it.
- Erosion can cause sinkholes in the yard or a structure, such as a driveway, to crack and break.
- Line breaks near the foundation of the home can cause cracks over time if not repaired.
- Leaking service lines near the foundation can seep into the home causing moisture damage.
- These leaks are sometimes difficult to see. Check for excessively green patches of grass, puddles of standing water when it has not rained, and cracks at curbs, foundations, or driveways. Periodically shut off all water in the home and check your meter; write down the reading. Wait 20 minutes check it again. If the numbers moved, you have a leak.

Service Line Leaks in your Home

- This can occur behind walls, in the ceiling, or the basement of your home.
- Indoor service line leaks can cause moisture damage.
- A small leak is likely to get larger over time.
- A line leak in the home can cause significant water damage.
- Dripping faucets can usually be repaired with a new washer.
- A visual inspection of your home: particularly cold and moist spots on the wall, unexplained standing water, brown spots in the ceiling, or black spots on the wall can indicate an indoor service line leak.



Toilet Leaks

- Spontaneous flushing and gurgling sounds indicate a toilet that is leaking. Water can be leaking through it even when there is no noise.
- Not all toilet leaks make noise.
- Having to hold down the toilet handle to flush means your toilet is broken. There is a high likelihood the flapper and/or arm are in need of replacement. If unrepaired the flapper can catch and allow thousands of gallons of water to pass through the toilet unnoticed.
- With a toilet leak the water is discharged continually through the sewer system; there is usually no visible leak.
- Toilet leaks can be intermittent, a deteriorating flapper can become unseated and then reseal at the next flush.
- A small toilet leak can become more severe if the internal mechanisms catch or deteriorate further.
- There is no such thing as a universal flapper. Visit www.cobbwater.org/efficiency.htm for a list of flappers designed for your toilet. Replacement with the wrong flapper can result in even greater water loss.
- Toilets are usually one of the most cost-effective and simplest plumbing repairs.
- Check your toilets every time you change your smoke alarm batteries. Lift the lid from the tank, add a few drops of food coloring, wait 10 minutes without flushing, check the bowl, if any color is in the bowl you have a leak.

General Leak Inspection and Best Practices

- Have a certified irrigation auditor check your irrigation system every year before starting it. Make sure the irrigation contractor has his CLIA from the Irrigation Association.
- Winterize your irrigation system every year and turn it off for the season. A pressurized irrigation system is subject to frozen pipes and an undetected leak can add up to thousands of gallons of water lost, when the system is not in use.
- When using an irrigation system, perform a visual inspection of the system once a month. Look for missing heads, over spray onto pavement, eroded areas, cracks in pavement, or excessively green patches of grass.
- Check your water heater. Water underneath the heater is not normal.
- Discharge water from your water heater annually to prevent build up that can damage the appliance and shorten its life.
- When the temperature dips wrap your pipes to avoid frozen pipes that rupture and damage your home.
- Leave cabinet doors open on cold nights to expose pipes to warm household air.
- When in doubt let the faucet drip slowly, a small drip uses significantly less water than a ruptured pipe.
- Drips add up, check your outdoor spigots, as well as your indoor faucets, to ensure they are fully off and are not dripping.
- Call a licensed plumber to investigate any suspicious or unexplained standing water.
- Look under your sink. Wet spots or soft wood below the sink pipe indicates a plumbing problem.